

MADISON COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

December / January 2007

By Steve DiGiovanna - Communication Coordinator

“Coming together is a beginning - Keeping together is progress - Working together is success”

Madison County buys “Mobile Command Unit”

The Madison County Commissioners approved the recent acquisition of a 2004 Toy Box RV trailer to serve as a Madison County Mobile Command Post.

The 22 foot long trailer is a joint purchase venture by the Madison County Sheriff’s Office and the Madison County Communication Department.

The RV style trailer is being converted into a Command and Communications unit in order to supply “on site” Command and Control functions for all types of emergency responses within Madison County.

Some of the incidents the unit will be used for include:

Search and Rescue Operations, Earthquakes, Fires, Floods, long term law enforcement activity, multi-casualty incidents, and planned events such as Rodeos, Parades and large public gatherings.

The newly purchased unit will be lightly remodeled to carry portable tables, chairs, maps, radios, lighting, a power generator, new antennas and Incident Command material used to manage significant emergencies.

The Madison County emergency agencies that can utilize the Mobile Command Unit include the **Sheriff’s Office**, **Madison County Search and Rescue**, local **fire** agencies, **CERT**, Madison County ambulance agencies, **DES** and the newly developing **Madison County Incident Management Team**.

The need for this type of unit has been discussed for several years. After a recent training exercise involving a catastrophic dam failure scenario, the **Sheriff’s Office**, **DES** and the **Communications Department** began serious discussions, negotiations and planning for the purchase of such a vehicle.

In the past, Incident Command functions were directed from the front seat or the hood of a patrol car.

Sheriff Dave Schenk has long understood the need to get Incident Commanders and emergency responders out of the rain, wind, snow and dark.

“It was our goal to provide our county responders with an effective starting point - to get our Incident Commanders out of the harsh elements - and to provide a more effective environment for planning, managing and communicating during major incidents” said Sheriff Schenk.

County officials recognize that though the unit is not a “brand new high dollar Cadillac” type command post, it is a very adequate starting point and an effective stop gap measure - until additional funds can be acquired to improve upon the resource needs of the county.

“We will continue to seek funds through State and Federal Grants and County coffers - in order to upgrade this unit within a couple of years” said Chris Mumme, Director of Emergency Management. “Right now, the issue is to get an effective, affordable unit in service - and though it has taken more time than we anticipated, through a cooperative county effort, the plan is now taking shape”.

The Sheriff’s Office, the Incident Management Team and Madison County Search and Rescue personnel have collectively started volunteering their time and energy to layout and equip the Mobile Command Unit. With teamwork and a joint effort, Madison County hopes to have this unit operational by late January 2008.



MADISON COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

December/January 2007 Monthly Newsletter

“Providing direction to Madison County Emergency Services”

December, 2007

Christopher W. Mumme, Director

It is 2 A. M. - you are a Deputy for the Madison County Sheriffs Office – and you are driving down Highway 287 when a call comes over the radio. “25-11, respond to a residential burglary alarm at 261 Antelope Acres in Virginia City Ranches, your back-up is responding from Twin Bridges”.

You have just been advised of a burglary alarm at a rural private home and of course, caution is advised. When you arrive, the house is dark, the area is quiet, but you must investigate to see if all is normal. After a careful evaluation of the scene, you find that there is no one home - and you have to mark it up as just another “false alarm”. Another one of the 98% of electronic alarms that fall into the “false electronic alarm category”.

Unfortunately, this is the story heard over and over again. From January, 2007 through November, 2007, Madison County dispatch handled 56 alarms - and 55 of them were false. That is a 98% error rate of all alarms for this year. Out of these 55 false alarms, 30 were responded to and found the premises secure, 22 the alarms were cancelled while an officer was in route and 3 were cancelled before an officer was called out.

The LEPC, with Commissioner approval, has taken up the issue and directed me to write up an ordinance to address the false alarm problem. The ordinance has been modeled after the Bozeman City Ordinance on False alarms with a few changes and also a fine schedule for offenders:

For department response to scene where the alarm was deemed false, the fines will be as follows:

(per 12 month period – January 1st through December 31st – each year)

1st & 2nd alarm will not be fined but a written warning will be issued.

3rd alarm will be fined \$100.00.

4th alarm will be fined \$200.00 ,

Each subsequent alarm will double the fine - ie: 5th results in \$400.00 and so on until determined by Director of Public Safety that the cause of said false alarms is corrected or deemed to be a “no-response” location.

With approval from the legal department, I will present this proposed ordinance to the County Commission in the near future.

For more information the ‘proposed’ ordinance, please contact me for a copy or email me for an attachment.